

PRATHAM BOOKS
A Book in Every Child's Hand

Wailers Three - A Folktale From China

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Illustrator: Greystroke

Level 3





One day old Mrs. Chang in the village got a letter. It was from her son Chen, who lived far away in Beijing. She could not read, so she waited in front of her house for someone to come by who could read out the letter to her. After some time, Warrior Wen came by, swinging his exquisitely carved staff. Old Mrs. Chang stopped him and said, “O brave warrior, could you do me a favour and read out this letter from my son to me?” Warrior Wen immediately agreed.





He took the letter from the old lady and opened it. Mrs. Chang sat down in eager anticipation of news from her dear son. But one look at the letter and Warrior Wen began to wail loudly.
“What is it, Warrior Wen? What is it? Tell me, is something wrong with my son?” asked old Mrs. Chang anxiously. But Warrior Wen didn’t say a word – he only looked up at her and began to wail even louder than before.



Poor Mrs. Chang was sure that something dreadful had happened to her son. Tears welled up in her eyes and she began wailing loudly too. Plish… plosh… plish… plosh... the tears rolled down the cheeks of the brave warrior and the old lady.

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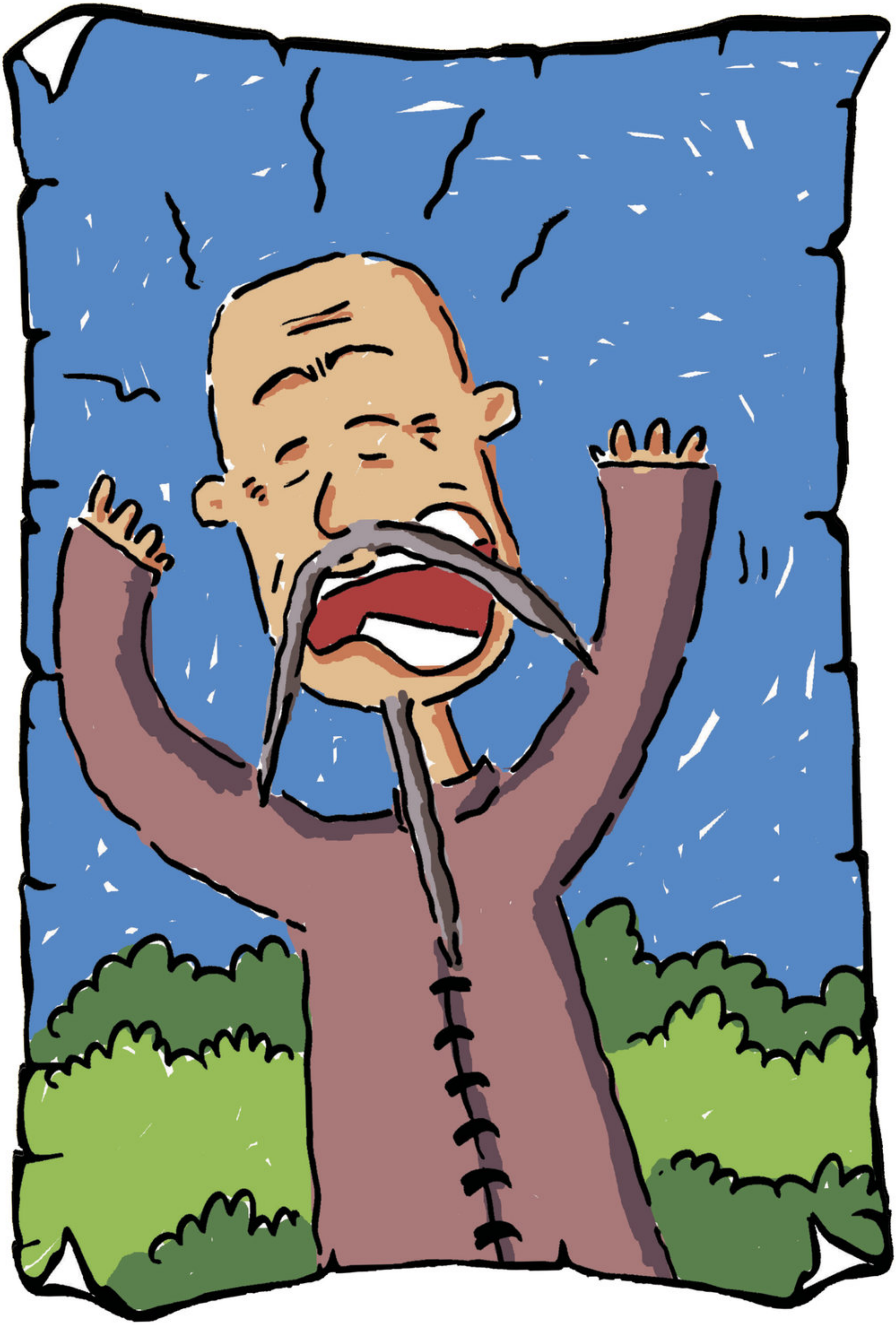
A little later, Peddler Peng came by. And what do you think he did when he saw the old lady and the warrior wailing in unison? Well, he sat down with them and began crying too! What a racket they created!

The three wailers sobbibng their hearts out…
Waaaaaaaa… baaaaaaaawwww……
booooooooo……. Hoooooooo…….

Hearing the cacophonic cries, Master Ming, whose school was just around the corner from Mrs. Chang's house, came rushing out. Several curious kids followed suit – some giggling, some chattering, some whispering, but all delighted that their class had been interrupted!

When Master Ming saw the weeping chorus, he ran up to them worriedly. What could have gone so terribly wrong, he wondered, as he sprinted down the road.
"Boooooooooo…… hooooooooooooo…. Waaaaaaaaaaaa….." came the response.

Master Ming was beginning to lose his patience. "Out with it you howling hyenas!" he thundered. Taken aback by his roar that was even louder than their waaaaaa...ils, Peddler Peng was the first to answer.



“Sniff… sob… Just a year ago,” he said, and wiped his running nose, “I had made a hundred earthen pots to be sold in the market. But as I was on my way, the donkey that was carrying them got frightened by his own shadow and started to bray loudly!

And my pots, they all came tumbling down one by one and broke into a million pieces. Not even one beautiful pot was left unbroken. I was so upset. I wanted to cry and cry and cry then, but I couldn’t do it because I had to immediately think up ways to make up for my losses. So I postponed it.

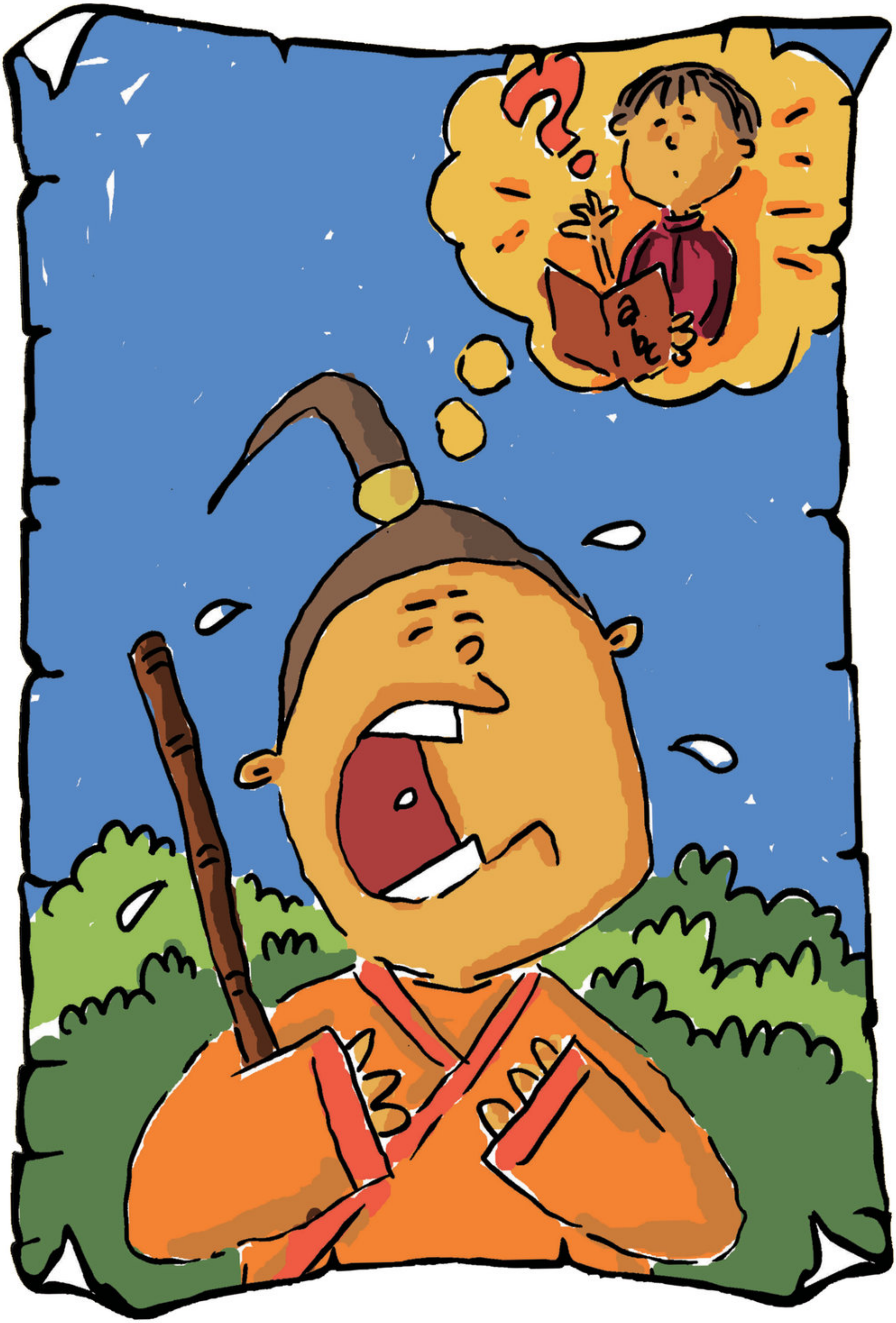
Today, when I saw the two of them crying, I was reminded of that heartbreaking episode and decided to cry for my precious, pretty pots. Waaaaaa….”

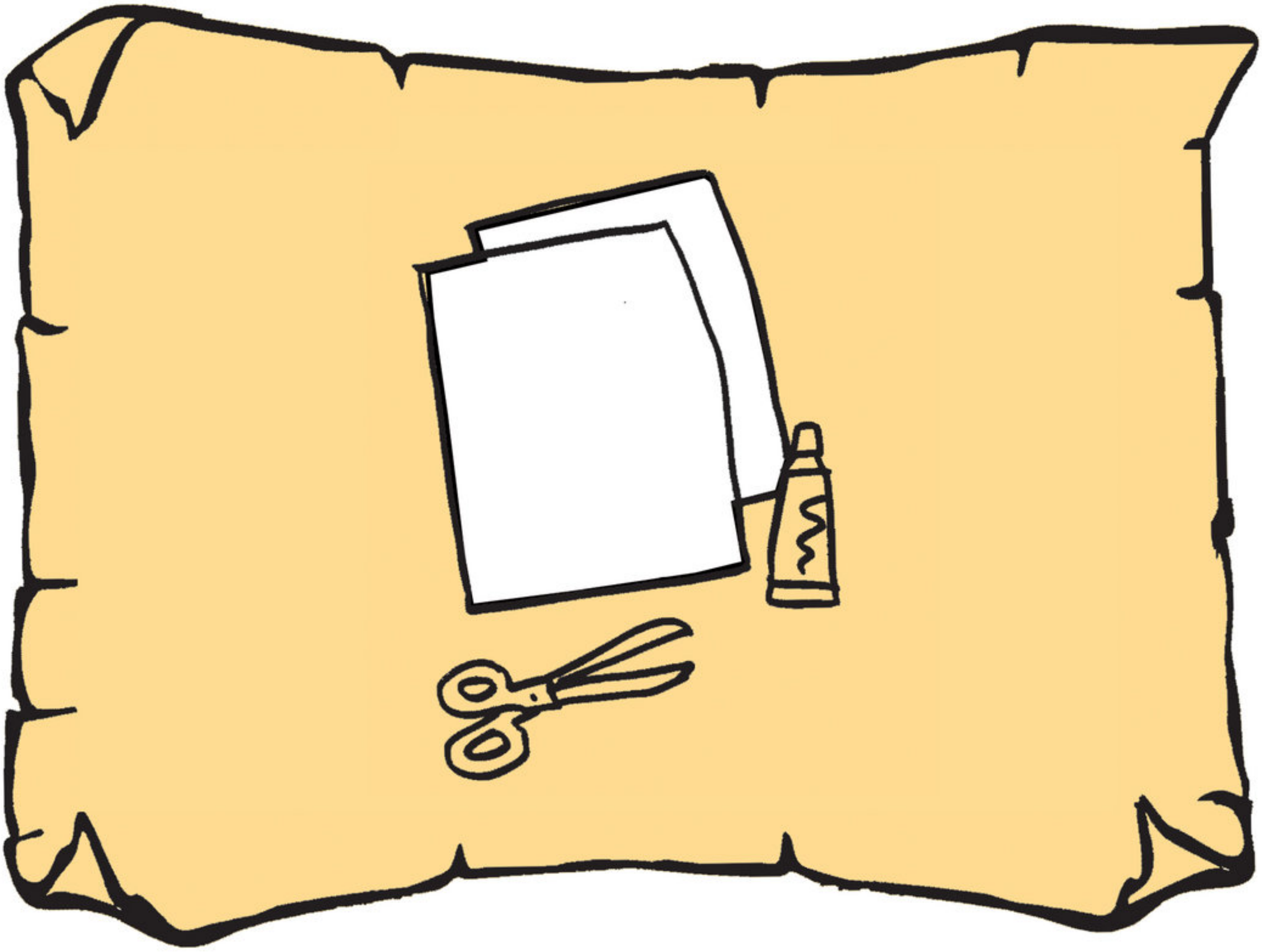


Before Master Ming could react, Mrs. Chang spoke. “I got a letter from my son in Beijing this morning. I don’t know how to read, so I asked Warrior Wen to read it out for me. But he began crying as soon as he opened the letter.Something terrible must have happened to my son! Something awful, horrible, unimaginable… O my poor Chen, poor, poor Chen…. Booo…. Hoooo…..”

Even as an exasperated Master Ming consoled old Mrs. Chang, Warrior Wen bravely fought back his tears and opened his mouth. “To tell you the truth, Master, I didn’t read my books very well when I was in school. I never paid any attention to my teachers and to my lessons, so I still don’t know how to read. I am so ashamed of myself! Bawwwwww………” he wailed.

Master Ming was dumbstruck!





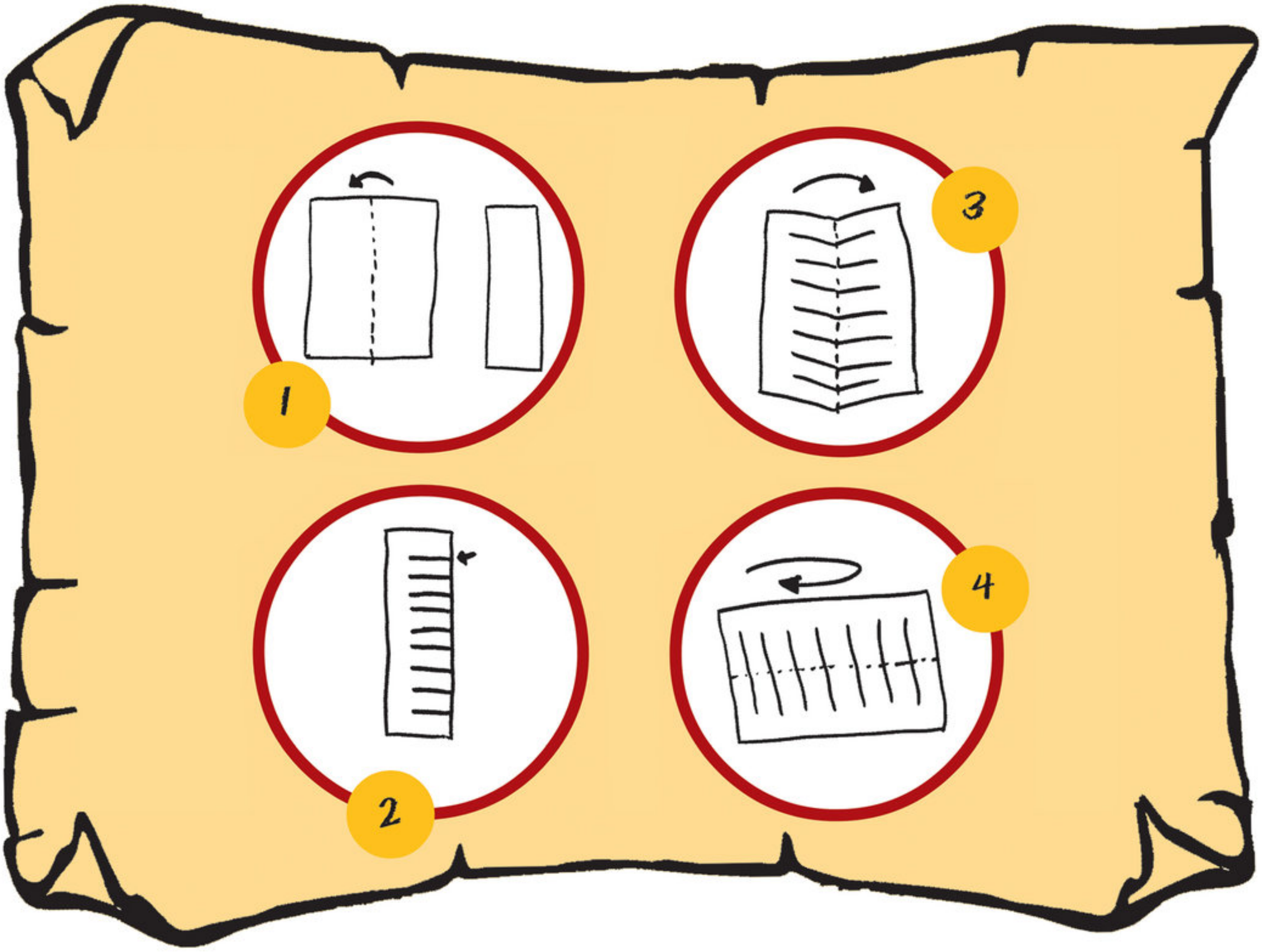
LANTERN IN A JIFFY!

Do you know that paper was invented in china, where this story comes from? The Chinese are famous for their paper crafts, which they use as decorations at home. Want to your hand at a paper craft too? Well, here's a simple, colourful lantern that you can make with just paper, scissors and glue. Make as many of them as you wish and brighten up your home!

YOU NEED:

A. 2 sheets of coloured paper (21 cm x 29 cm each)

B. Scissors **C.** Glue



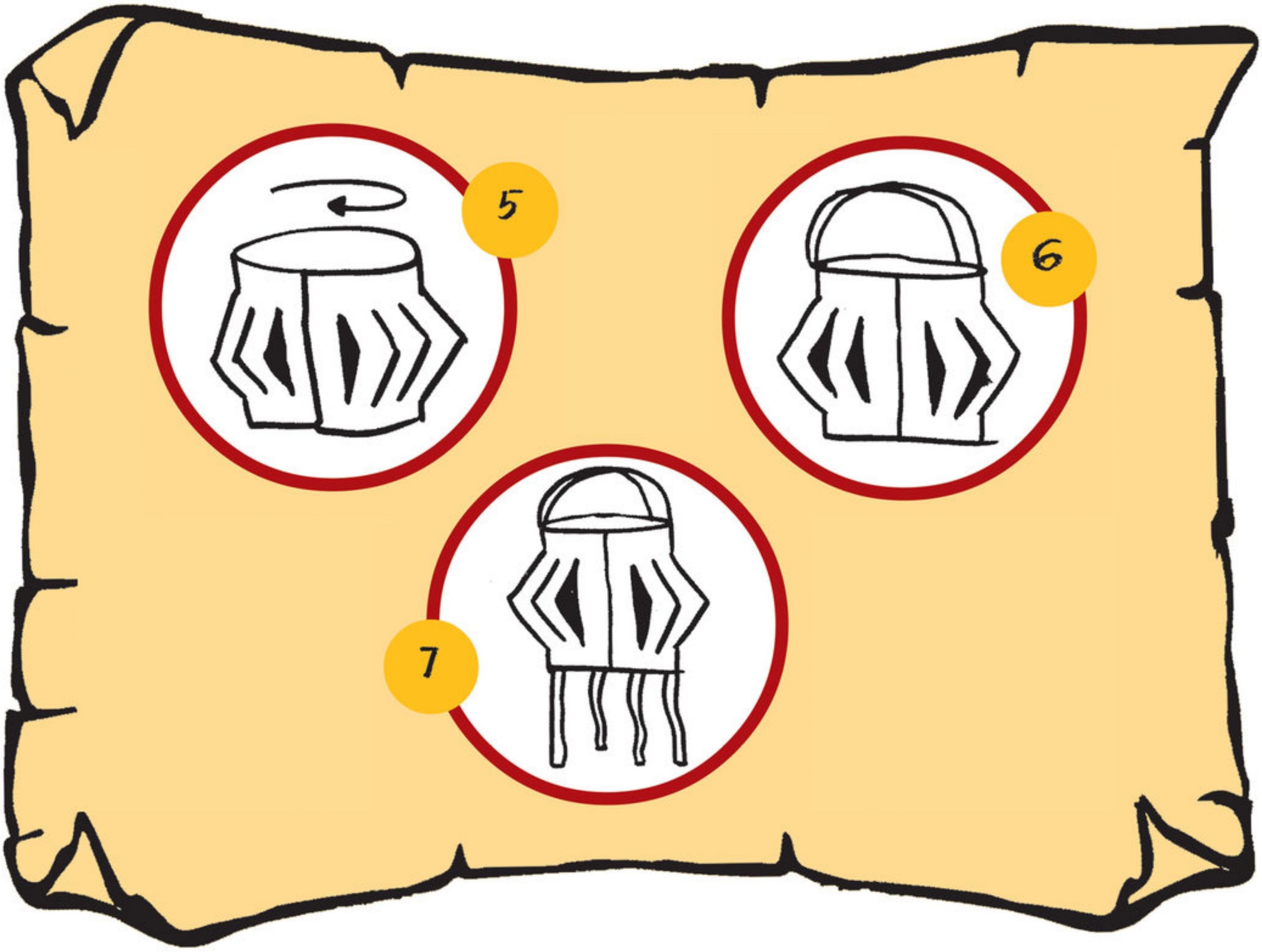
HOW TO MAKE THE PAPER LANTERN:

1. Fold the paper in half lengthwise.

2. With the scissors, make slits along the folded edge as shown.

3. Unfold the paper.

4. Place the paper lengthwise. Lift the right edge and place it over the left.



5. Stick the edges together to form a circle.

6. Now cut a strip of paper and stick it on the top as shown. Your paper lantern is almost ready.

7. Cut a few more strips and stick them along the lower edge of the lantern as shown.

Your paper lantern is ready to be hung in your home!

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Wailers Three - A Folktale From China
(English)

Mrs. Chang gets a letter from her son one day. She asks Warrior Wen to read it out to her. One look at the letter and Warrior Wen bursts into tears. Very soon, Mrs.Chang starts bawling. Next, Peddlar Peng, who is passing, by joins the sobbing duo. What has happened to Mrs. Chang's son? Find out for yourself in this delightful folktale from China?

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.